

# Please DENY the petition for 30 Brattle Street signs

Michael Brandon <mjbrandon@gmail.com>

Mon 4/27/2015 7:37 PM

City Clerk Agenda

To: Lopez, Donna <dlopez@cambridgema.gov>;

 1 attachment (64 KB)

CitizensBankProjectingSignPetition.pdf;

RE: Citizens Bank, 30 Brattle St. (4/27/15 Application/Petition Agenda Item 3)

3. An application was received from Citizens Bank requesting permission for ten banners at the premises numbered 30 Brattle Street. Approval has been received from Inspectional Services, Department of Public Works, Community Development, Historical Commission and abutters.

Councilors:

I ask that you to deny the applicant's request for a panoply of projecting signs over the public way and also refer the matter back to the City Clerk and to the City Manager for reports on anomalies in the permitting process.

Besides encroaching physically into the public's domain, these ten banners would intrude visually in a hodgepodge of clutter that in my opinion will degrade the structure's appearance when viewed in the context of some two dozen individual signs proposed in total for the building's facade.

Instead of installing a carnival of garish signs that compete with one another and detract from public views and the overall character of Harvard Square, a more sensitive, uniform display listing the property's three retail tenants surely can be designed.

While the City Clerk's agenda description (copied above) states that the application has been approved by ISD and DPW, the required signatures from these departments are missing from the Web-posted version of the petition that is presumably before you in hard copy for consideration (see page attached). It may be that the Inspectional Services Department refrained from signing off because of ongoing administrative confusion about whether the full sign proposal for this site--which includes many wall signs in addition to the ten projecting signs--conforms with the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. Indeed, since a variance petition from the proponent is still pending before the Board of Zoning Appeals, granting the projecting-sign permit at this time may constitute approval by the City Council of signs that violate the zoning regulations.

I therefore urge you to reject the current petition or at least refer the matter to the City Manager for a detailed report on the uncertainty that has surrounded the full sign proposal for 30 Brattle Street, including written opinions from the ISD Commissioner and the City Solicitor concerning the legality of the signs requested.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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